

Dear committee

I have been a Danbury resident for 22 years. And I grew up in Brookfield. My daughter has been in the Danbury school system for 12 years. She will graduate this spring and attend college in the fall. She has struggled with a learning disability (dyslexia) all her life. Yet she has worked hard and has been given the support services she has needed through the Danbury school system since the fourth grade. I have personally been involved with the Special Ed programs at each level of schooling as well as been involved and held an officers position in the PTO through out my daughters schooling. I have been a strong advocate of the Danbury community and support the connection between the community, school by being an member of the School Governance Council and funding coalition.

I can say, first hand, that I have seen the Danbury Schools be able to offer many programs, clubs and services. Many surrounding schools utilize the Danbury schools for the many and diverse services, such as Special Ed., to serve their students since they may not have the services in place at their schools.

The High School, is the largest in the state, which lends itself to its own individuated concerns. DHS has a diverse population and many in need of ELL programs and reduced lunch services due to the lower economic base of the city. Yet I know Danbury has graduated very capable and accomplished students. over the years, with minimal funds from the state and we can only expect so much revenue from the city considering Danbury's mill rate is already high and the lowest income town in Fairfield county most likely can not withstand a rate increase. I have enjoyed living in Danbury and have been proud that my blond hair blue eyed daughter has felt confident and comfortable in Danbury's diverse population and will graduate with honor and pride from DHS.

I am stating the above because I am concerned about the public schooling system in Connecticut and how the state funding formula has not been an appropriate way to properly and equitably fund the schools. I know there was a lawsuit with respect to this formula and that a new one is mandated to be created to better serve our communities. I strongly agree with that judgement. And I have read the recent changes, that Governor Malloy has recently made in the education budget. (info. received from the CT school finance project) I believe the separation of the spec ed funds was reasonable and will be more appropriately distributed based on needs and services rendered by the schools. I know it will take time to make adjustments, and it may not be popular with some towns/cities . Though it needs to be done to save our schooling system. I am actually in favor of creating a regional formula which may be a way to help distribute funds more appropriately over a broader base which may be useful for future educational structuring, as in magnet and charter schools. Thank you for your service and for considerations in this matter

Elizabeth Tilly
Danbury resident